

DESCRIPTION OF A SUPPOSED NEW GRASS-WREN.

BY T. CARTER, M.B.O.U., Broome Hill, W.A.

(Communicated by A. J. Campbell, C.M.B.O.U.)

(Read before the Field Naturalists' Club of Victoria, 10th Aug., 1908.)

HAVING recently procured a specimen of an *Amytis* which does not agree in many particulars with Mr. Milligan's description of *Amytis gigantura* (*megalurus*, Sharpe), (*Vict. Nat.*, xviii. (1901), p. 27), I send the following description and proposed name for it, as I think it will prove to be a new species.

Up to the present I believe only one specimen of *A. gigantura* has been obtained, and that is not available for inspection at time of writing, but upon future comparison, or the obtaining of a further series of skins, should the bird just obtained prove to be the same, the following description may still be of value in showing variations in colour and size. Mr. Milligan's account did not mention the sex, and, unfortunately, my specimen was so severely shot that the sex could not be determined with certainty, but I think it is a female. Probably it is not very material, as the sexes in this genus do not differ very much in colour.

AMYTIS VARIA, Marlock Grass-Wren, *sp. nov.* (?).

Forehead, crown of head, hind neck, and cheeks black, with numerous striations of white. The whole of mantle, back, and upper tail coverts rich rufous on margins of feathers, the centre part of each feather being dark chocolate-brown, and the shafts white, which white, extending some little distance up the vanes, gives the whole of the striations on the head, hind neck, and mantle a remarkable "fish-bone," or, as I believe ladies would term it, "feather-stitch" appearance. Tail, rusty-brown, with shafts (10) darker in shade on upper surface, the whole of the tail feathers being distinctly barred with about thirty bars. Under surface of tail feathers reddish-brown, with whitey-red shafts. Chin, throat, and breast rufous, each feather striated with white. Sides of chest and abdomen similar, but darker in shade, and striations not so white. Flanks and under tail coverts still darker in colour, but striations pronounced on under tail coverts. Primaries dark brown, with lighter margins and white shafts. Under wing coverts bright chestnut. Bill dark horn colour. Tarsi dark purplish-flesh, with feet of a darker shade. Soles yellowish. Irides reddish hazel. Rictal bristles six in number on each side—four together, stout, and about 10 mm. in length, the remaining pairs, next the beak, being slightly shorter and thinner. The whole of bristles very distinct and visible.

Below I have tabulated the main differences between the two skins, for better comparison:—

Anytis gigantura (megalurus).

Mr. Milligan describes this as having rusty-red shoulder-patches as in *textilis*, and further on as having "a bright chestnut patch on each side of spring" (*sic*) "but in front of thigh."

"Whole of the upper surface, extending from the forehead to and including the wings and tail, a uniform dull brown.

Rictal bristles six, the sixth being rudimentary. [Apparently all are small, as a powerful lens had to be used to make them out. —T.C.]

[There is no mention of bars on tail feathers.] Shafts of tail feathers lighter than webs.

Length	Wing	Tail	Tarsus	Culmen
7.25	2.75	3.75	0.95	0.5

As I have only seen this bird on three occasions, and each time in a patch of "Marlock" scrub, I propose the vernacular name of Marlock Grass-Wren.

A. varia.

No chestnut patches on body or shoulders.

Upper surface in three distinct shades, the dark head and neck being very pronounced.

All six bristles well developed, and visible to average eyesight.

Bars on tail feathers very distinct, and shafts above much darker than webs.

Soft parts different in colour.

Length	Wing	Tail	Tarsus	Culmen
7.50	3.0	4.20	1.20	0.4

SCENERY PRESERVATION.—The beautifully illustrated report for 1907-8 of the Scenery Preservation Board of New Zealand is an example which might well be followed by the Australian States. New Zealand has grasped the fact that much beautiful scenery is quickly destroyed by the opening up of the country by railways, &c.—witness the many picturesque gullies which were visible when our Gembrook line was first opened, now tenanted by rung timber and burnt tree ferns. The report for 1907-8 deals mainly with the scenery of the Wanganui River, well known as one of the beauty spots of the world. This river, which is navigable for small passenger steamers to 143 miles from its mouth, has been carefully examined, and it is proposed to make no less than 54 reservations along its banks, varying from 30 to 9,000 acres, amounting in all to 46,500 acres. These reservations, while leaving plenty of places for settlement, will include all the most picturesque bluffs, bends, &c., and prevent the river being robbed of its beauty by the advance of settlement. Up to 31st March last 117 reservations have been made in various parts of New Zealand, amounting to 34,000 acres. Much of this land had to be repurchased, having been previously sold or selected, at a cost of about £15,500. A brief *résumé* is given of what has been done in Australia in the same direction, but it is very insignificant compared with what is being done in the Argentine Republic, where extensive areas